

Minutes for the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting of October 6, 2008

Board members present were Jack Johnson, Stephan Miller, Ron Sender, Christopher Tonkin, Ted Packard, Jeff Roth, and Scott Smith. Pete Howard, Ray Jones, Nathan Jones, Phil Goff, Joey Glushko, and Lauren Hefferon were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31.

Positive Stories: Ron read an e-mail message written by Lauren Hefferon regarding the recent Bikeway Celebration.

*The minutes from the September meeting were approved without corrections.

Feedback from recent events including ABAC's Town Day booth, Minuteman Bikeway Celebration etc. Jack filled us in on the success of the Hub On Wheels in Boston, where Storrow Drive was closed to motorized traffic in both directions. We also discussed the opening of the bike-parking cage at Alewife Station. The MBTA is also thinking about putting bike cages in at Forest Hills and other stations. Ron and Jack gave a report on the ABAC Town Day table. We spoke with many people about bike commuting. Lauren told us about the event celebrating the Bikeway Hall of Fame induction in Lexington. We talked for a while about what the bikeway means to us and summarized the positive publicity the event received.

Scott told us the results of the bike counts taken this summer in Arlington Center. The number of bicycles using Mass. Ave. is up about 25% over last year. The number of total trips on the bike path has been estimated to be upwards of two million a year.

Discussion of bicycling issues related to Arlington Public Schools (with concerned parent Lauren Hefferon). Lauren reminded us that there is no written policy against students riding to the elementary school. Lauren thinks that we need to keep this issue on the school agendas. Scott gave a brief history of his involvement in the issue. Lauren added that some students are already riding to school. Scott believes that ABAC and others need to help allay the principals' fears. Lauren believes that we need cycling instruction in the schools so that children learn to ride safely and defensively.

Scott suggested that we supply bike racks to the schools as part of our existing bike-rack program. Pete would like to see a top-down approach to have the School Committee to take a positive view of cycling to school. Scott informed us that the real practical decision-making lies with the principals. Jack suggested that Lauren could select one or two principals and meet with them to initiate a dialog. He also thought that we should also get on the agenda of a School Committee meeting to discuss the overall policy.

We proposed that a subcommittee be appointed to deal with this issue within ABAC. Ted, Jeff, Scott, and Phil will participate in this subcommittee, along with Lauren. Joey

also suggested Sustainable Arlington as a possible ally that could possibly prepare a letter in support of our position.

Update on Mass. Ave. Corridor project in East Arlington. Phil filled us in on the first public hearing of the Mass. Ave. Corridor project. He highlighted the ambitious timeline and whether it will be possible to meet it. The projected start date is sometime in 2011. Scott mentioned that different concerns will need to be addressed in the design. The official position is to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists while maintaining automobile flow. Lauren thought that something should be done to make the road safer between now and 2011. Jack will prepare and send a summary of our views to Laura Wiener in the Planning Department.

Update/discussion on bike lanes and wide shoulders. Jeff shared with us his measurements of the width of Mass. Ave. west of Arlington Center. The average roadway width (curb-to-curb) is about 50 feet, which is probably more appropriate for sharing lanes rather than dedicated bike lanes.

Update and discussion on suitable bike-rack locations, eligible for MAPC grant program. We must order bike racks in time to qualify for rebates from MAPC next spring. Jack presented Joey with a survey of bike rack locations made in 1996. Most of these recommended locations still do not have racks.

Preliminary planning for the 2009 Winter Social. We discussed whether we want to produce the Winter Social again this year and whether we can afford it. Phil and Christopher thought that we could solicit donations to defray costs. Phil asked why the social is scheduled in February? We answered that it was nice to have a bike related event in the middle of the winter. We decided that we would indeed have a social again this winter.

Proposal for an ABAC strategic planning session, later this fall or winter. Jack suggested that we hold a strategic planning meeting to map out a priority plan for ABAC. He would like to have the meeting sometime this winter. Jack will propose a schedule and look for a venue.

Open forum. Pete made a plea for the renovation of the Spy Pond path. He told us that the Spy Pond committee has been working on stabilizing the banks of the pond along the path. Pete would like our advice and help with the renovation. ABAC members were supportive of improving this pathway.

*The meeting was adjourned at 9:40.

*Denotes a vote was taken.

Minutes submitted by Stephan Miller.